



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Deval L. Patrick
GOVERNOR

Timothy P. Murray
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Ian A. Bowles
SECRETARY

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Tel: (617) 626-1000
Fax: (617) 626-1181
<http://www.mass.gov/envir>

Contact:
Lisa Capone
(617) 626-1119
Robert Keough
(617) 626-1109

Patrick Administration Announces \$1.25 Million in Grants For Land Conservation on Cape Cod

Projects in Yarmouth, Brewster and Orleans Will Protect Over 19 Acres

YARMOUTH – With scenic Dennis Pond in view, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Ian Bowles today joined local officials and members of the Cape Cod conservation community to announce \$1.25 million in grants that will facilitate the protection of key parcels of land in Yarmouth, Brewster, and Orleans.

In Brewster, EEA's Self-Help Program awarded the town \$500,000 to help purchase 9.8 acres of wooded ridgeline that expands a 1000-acre protected area harboring three rare species. The town of Orleans received \$500,000 toward the purchase of 6.5 acres fronting a saltwater pond (Arey's Pond) and a tidal river within the Pleasant Bay Area of Critical Environmental Concern. Bowles made today's announcement in Yarmouth, which received \$250,000 to acquire the last 2.76 acres needed to complete a comprehensive land conservation project that completely surrounds a coastal plain pond. The Yarmouth purchase culminates a 15-year effort to protect Dennis Pond, which is renowned locally for its scenic beauty, as well as its value as a recreational resource and as habitat for rare and endangered plants and insects.

"As a Cape Cod native, I couldn't be more pleased to present these grants to the towns of Yarmouth, Orleans and Brewster," Secretary Bowles said. "Cape Cod is one of the Commonwealth's signature landscapes – and also a place where pressure to develop remaining open space is particularly intense. The partnerships we're celebrating today represent victories for all who value the unique character and natural resources of the Cape."

The Cape Cod awards are among 23 Self-Help Program grants recently announced for cities and towns statewide. Totaling \$7.95 million, the funds will help communities across Massachusetts protect 1,405 acres of forests, wetlands, fields and farms as part of Governor Patrick's plan to invest more than \$50 million in land conservation annually over the next five years.

Since 1961, EEA's Self-Help Program has helped cities and towns acquire land for conservation and outdoor recreation such as hiking, wildlife watching, fishing, hunting, and cross-country skiing. Municipalities may use grant funds to purchase land or partial interests, such as conservation restrictions. This year's \$7.95 million in grants included approximately \$6.2 million in state funding and \$1.7 million from the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund, which EEA's Division of Conservation Services administers for the Commonwealth.

To qualify for grants, communities must supply local matching funds, and protected open space must be open to the public. Communities must also complete a comprehensive Open Space and Recreation Plan outlining their priorities for open space protection. In Yarmouth, the Yarmouth Conservation Trust matched the Commonwealth's \$250,000 grant to purchase the last remaining unprotected land surrounding Dennis Pond. The Brewster Conservation Trust partnered with the state on Brewster's Stony Brook project, while the Orleans Sparrow Property project received technical assistance from the Cape Cod Compact of Conservation Trusts. All three municipalities each provided funds toward their own local projects as well.

"I am pleased to announce the prioritization of these monies for my communities. Open space and habitat protection are important to maintaining the natural beauty of the Cape for generations to come," said Senator Robert O'Leary.

"It is gratifying to see that the Commonwealth remains willing to participate in assisting communities in expanding open space areas on the Cape," Rep. Cleon Turner said. "The grants for both Yarmouth and Brewster allow purchases of properties that are adjacent to existing open space that have been purchased through local efforts."

"I am pleased to see these grant funds awarded to such deserving projects such as Dennis Pond," Rep. Demetrius J. Atsalis said. "These monies will allow for the purchase of 2.76 acres around the pond solidifying the protection of this valued water resource."

"The Sparrow property is important on many levels to both Orleans and to the region. I'm glad that the State is able to partner with the Town and support conservation of this critical piece of open space located on Arey's Pond," said Rep. Sarah K. Peake.

"The town of Yarmouth is very pleased and grateful to receive the grant of \$250,000 from the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to enable the town to complete the purchase of a key 2.76 acre piece of property along the shore of Dennis Pond in Yarmouth Port," added E. Suzanne McAuliffe, chairman of the Yarmouth Board of Selectmen. "This grant allows the town to complete our ownership and protection of this important great pond in Yarmouth. The Selectmen would like to thank, in addition to the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the Yarmouth Conservation Trust, Yarmouth Conservation Commission, the International Fund for Animal Welfare, the Yarmouth Community Preservation Committee, and The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts for their work and financial assistance to make this purchase a reality."

Added Edward Lewis, chairman of the Brewster Board of Selectmen, "The town of Brewster is extremely pleased to be a recipient of a \$500,000 grant under the FY2008 Self-Help program from Governor Patrick and the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. This grant award was a critical factor in the town's acquisition of 10 acres in the Stony Brook Valley."

The Patrick Administration's FY 2008 combined statewide funding of \$14 million for the Self Help and Urban Self Help programs represents the largest expenditure in the history of these programs. For more information about EEA's land protection grants for cities and towns, visit <http://www.mass.gov/envir/dcs/selfhelp/default.htm>.

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